

Theories still thrive on JFK assassination

□ Some say war hawks wanted him dead; others blame the Mafia.

By Craig Brandon

Staff writer

ALBANY — If Lee Harvey Oswald had lived long enough to stand trial for the murder of President John F. Kennedy he probably would not have been convicted, according to a law student who has researched the case for a decade.

Mark Zaid, who will graduate from Albany Law School this year, told a crowd of about 150 people Wednesday night that much of the extensive evidence tying Oswald to the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination could not have been used in court because it was obtained illegally.

Zaid, who wrote an honors thesis at the University of Rochester on the coverup of medical evidence after the assassination, held a similar lecture at the school last year that continued well past midnight.

Pretrial publicity alone would have been enough to throw the case out, he said, because it would have been impossible to find a jury unfamiliar with the case.

In addition, he said, much of the physical evidence against Oswald was obtained from his Russian wife, Marina, and Texas law forbids a wife from testifying against her husband.

Also, since Oswald worked for the CIA at one time, he would have requested the release of top secret documents for his defense. Because the government would never have released those documents in the middle of the Cold War, Oswald would not have been able to prepare his case properly.

Evidence obtained from Oswald's home outside Dallas was illegally obtained without a search warrant by members of the Dallas police, who were outside of their jurisdiction, Zaid said.

Oswald was interrogated for 12 hours over three days, but despite numerous requests, he was never allowed to see a lawyer.

Police lineups used to identify him were improperly conducted, Zaid said, with Oswald mixed in with teenagers and Mexicans rather than people who might reasonably be considered similar to him.

All of this, Zaid said, is in addition to the fact that the case against Oswald has too many holes to stand

without some kind of conspiracy.

Zaid is one of many Kennedy assassination researchers who believe the Kennedy was killed by people working for the government — by conspirators who thought Kennedy was planning to remove troops from Vietnam, so they staged a coup d'etat to replace him with Lyndon Johnson.

Johnson escalated American military involvement in Asia.

This theory is the basis for Oliver Stone's new movie "JFK," which is to be released Dec. 20 and is expected to focus attention on the 28-year-old case.

The anniversary of the assassination is Friday. Those few minutes just after 12:30 p.m. in Dallas may be the most researched and talked about events in all of American history.

Zaid displayed dozens of books and articles about the assassination on two tables in the front of the hall and claimed that the "media, primarily the print media," were involved in a conspiracy to blame the assassination on Oswald, despite evidence that has been gathered by researchers showing it was a conspiracy.

Among those attending the lecture was Carl Weis, an assistant professor of fine arts at Siena College, who has been researching the assassination conspiracy theory since 1973.

Weis' theory is that the CIA, Howard Hughes and the Mafia were involved in a conspiracy to get rid of Kennedy, each for different reasons.

Besides the right-wing, anti-Communist zealots who were in favor of the war in Vietnam, Weiss said, drug interests were also interested in that part of the world, and the Mafia had connections to Kennedy that involved his many mistresses.

"More and more is coming together," said Weis, who sees the assassination as part of a wide coverup of illegal activities that involve everything from the crash of a plane in Newfoundland carrying American servicemen returning from Lebanon, to the plane crash that killed the wife of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hughes.

"The prime reasons Kennedy was assassinated were the Vietnam War and drugs," he said.

Documents that have recently been made public, he said, show that Kennedy signed a secret memo just days before he died ordering 1,000 troops home from Vietnam and the remainder to be pulled out after the 1964 election.

Days after the assassination, he said, Johnson reversed those orders.

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